DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 740 FL 010 913

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TITLE Suggestopedia: An Update for Second Language Teaching.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 34p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cognitive Processes; *Hypnosis; *Language Instruction; *Learning Processes; Learning Theories; *Second Language Learning; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Suggestopedia; *Superlearning; United States (West)

ABSTRACT

The suggestopedic technique of second language instruction is sketched. Recent efforts to adopt the technique in parts of the American West are reviewed. The historical precedent of suggestopedia and the interpretation of the technique by two linguists at the 1979 TESOL convention are investigated. Hypnosis is compared to suggestopedia, and "super-learning" is treated in terms of specific exercises that are supposed to help develop the ability to use the mind to its fullest capacity. It is concluded that although suggestopedia is complicated and hard to implement, it nonetheless has some promising aspects which still require more empirical evidence over an extended period of time to establish whether the benefits are worth the effort. (Author/JB)

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ED181740

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June, 1979

SUGGESTOPEDIA: An Update for Second Language Teaching

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia is a teaching method that purports to enhance learning via subliminal channels. It was developed in Bulgaria in the late 1960's and early 70's by Dr. Georgi Lozanov, an M.D., psychotherapist, and yogi. It can be used to teach a variety of subjects but its most significant use has been in the teaching of foreign languages. In its original form it encompassed Lozanov's theories of Suggestology -- the scientific study of suggestion, and Suggestopedia -- the application of suggestion to pedagogy. (Bancroft, 1976) It was brought to the attention of the West in 1970 when Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder wrote about it in their book Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain, and it was subsequently reported on by Jane Bancroft, a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto in 1971 when Lozanov spoke at the University on Suggestion and the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (Bancroft, Educational Courier:20) In the conclusion of her paper attempting to define and explain Suggestopedia, Bancroft invites Western scholars to find the underlying ideas, many of which constitute an original contribution to education, and to translate them into Western terms, reconstructing the statistical evidence in accordance with our own more rigorous and less ideological research methods. (Bancroft, 1976:51) This paper will attempt to explain how Suggestopedia works, give a description of the method as interpreted by Bancroft, and review what has come about in the West in the wake of Bancroft's report as a result of our own interpretation of Lozanov's work and the application of our own resources to this method.

Suggestopedia is a method of teaching that takes advantage of the subconscious aspect of learning. The human brain is endowed with the ability to think both consciously and subconsciously. We are aware of our conscious thoughts but we are often out of touch with our subconscious ones. It is claimed that we utilize only a portion of the physical part of our brain, and that the rest of the brain matter lies dormant and unused. We are unable to develop the rest of our brain capacity because we are limited by our preconceived notions of how learning takes place and what to do to inspire learning. Ostrander and Schroeder speculate that via suggestive learning techniques, when we learn to take advantage of the subconscious avenues to learning, we can, in a sense, develop the unused portion of the brain and realize ambitions that heretofore would impress the world as nothing short of miraculous. They seem to view it as the learning of the future or space age learning.

Our brains are like computers. We store all the information that we acquire in our lifetime of experiences along with our feelings associated with those experiences. (Penfield and Jasper, 1954:134 and Phoenix, 1979:5) We each have a subconscious memory bank that has all its information recorded, catalogued, and ready to be released on signal. The problem is that we don't know how to go about releasing the information at the appropriate time. All kinds of things interfere; extraneous factors such as attitudinal and affective variables as well as anxieties and apprehensions that result from personal

insecurities. What we have to learn to do is to build a bridge between the subconscious and the conscious avenues to the brain (Dale interview, April 1979) and coordinate the activities of both hemispheres in order to get the advantage that accrues when the brain is capable of working at peak performance level because all of the parts are holistically synchronized. (Ostrander and Schroeder, Penfield, Phoenix, Stevick, Bancroft) Idealistically Suggestopedia provides a method whereby one can learn to develop this talent. At this point in time it is premature to predict the outcome. Experts in education however, (Lozanov, Schuster, Dale) claim amazing results using this tact of teaching; results that go beyond the immediate goal of enhanced learning to an overall improvement in the physical, psychological, and general well being of the students involved in these programs. (Lozanov, Ostrander and Schroeder, Hammerman)

The main theoretical components of Suggestopedia as outlined by Lozanov are authority, infantilization, double-planeness, intonation, rhythm, and concert pseudo-passivity. (Bancroft, 1976) The concept of authority stems from the fact that everyone is suggestible within varying degrees. If we were not suggestible we would not be able to learn. (Dale interview, April 1979) "Prior to any introduction to hypnosis each person has a certain susceptibility to hypnosis and/or suggestion that has been developing since childhood much as one's I.Q. develops. Children are considered by hypnotists to be highly suggestible. That is why they seem to learn from their experiences without

apparent effort. It is almost as if they learn by means of osmosis. They are able to use all of their faculties for learning without interference from extraneous factors." (Hammerman, 1979) Besides being suggestible we have to have sufficient respect for the source from which the information comes in order to accept the information as being important enough to remember. Therefore the teacher has to be a person of elevated status in the eyes of the learner in order to have the credibility necessary for retentive learning to take place. It is thought that direct verbal suggestion on the conscious level can only be successful if made by a person who enjoys authority with the subject (a person who commands an elevated respect on the part of the public such as a doctor receives in our society). In the experiments conducted at the Institute of Suggestology it was concluded that memorization of basic material (foreign language words and phrases) increased considerably because of the suggestive power of authority, i.e., students remember best what comes from a well-known, highly respected authority. (Bancroft, 1976:27-32) Lozanov claims that increased receptivity to the information coming from the authoritative source is usually unconscious. "The role of authority in the communication process must not be too obvious for the more subtle and understated the techniques used by the one in authority, the greater the suggestibility of the recipient. Anti-suggestive barriers are more easily overcome if the student (or patient) is unaware, at the conscious level, of the actual techniques being used." (Bancroft, 1976:33)

A feeling of rapport or harmony must be established between the teacher and student and then the stage is set for learning to take place in any classroom with a variety of methods. This relationship is not unique to, but is an important element of, Suggestopedia.

Infantilization is the regression of the student to a childlike state in which he is more receptive to absorbing information without the interference of adult attitudes and anxieties. Lozanov's method asserts that an authority increases the motivation of the students and therefore the teacher must effectively play the role of an authority in the classroom maintaining the correct demeanor, establishing a distance between himself and the students and at the same time offering sympathy and understanding. One of the purposes of this is to put the student in the role of the child wherein it is believed by the scientists at the Institute of Suggestology that he will overcome the limitations of human memory and regress to a stage at which memorization is more spontaneous. This is called Infantilization. (Bancroft, 1976)

By double-planeness Lozanov seems to be referring to the fact that we do not only respond to obvious stimuli in our environment; we also respond to stimuli at an unconscious level. Teachers trained in the method of Suggestopedia must be knowledgeable in how to use both conscious and unconscious stimuli to enhance the learning situation. "According to the Lozanov concept of double-planeness, there is an enormous stream of diverse stimuli which emanate from the personality unconsciously

or semi-consciously. Quite often these unconscious signals (whether verbal or non-verbal) possess great information for the recipient. Imperceptible changes in tone of voice, gait, speech (as well as in the physical environment) can play a decisive role in suggesting the desired result. Usually this 'second plane' in behavior is a source of our intuitive impressions which influence our relations to persons and situations but in a way that is initially incomprehensible to the conscious mind." (Bancroft, 1976:37-38)

Lozanov discovered that people respond at a subliminal level (double-planeness) to rhythm and subsequently that learning and specifically memorization is enhanced when the material is presented by means of varying intonations. Intonation also plays a part in the establishment of the authoritative role of the teacher in the classroom when he uses an authoritative tone of voice. The use of language rhythm (intonation) and rhythm in music are both instrumental in Lozanov's method in bringing about the unique effect of providing what is referred to as hypermnesia. They (intonation and rhythm) help produce a subliminal response that allows the brain to absorb, retain, and recall more information than is normally expected. "Hypermnesia, the increased ability to recall, is often referred to as super-memory. It is considered to be one of the many benefits that hypnosis offers to facilitate learning. A number of studies conclude that hypnosis does enhance recall of meaningful material to a significant degree. (Dale, 1972:17)

...Dr. John Kihlstrom is more cautious about the advantages of

hypermnesia... He says that clinical studies in the U.S. indicate that hypnosis is useful and effective only if the material is meaningful (not out of context) and if it was well learned at some previous time. In other words, the material would have to be already present in the memory and available for recall in order for hypnosis to be effective. (Kihlstrom, interview October 1978)." (Hammerman, 1979:16) In the Suggestopedia method the material is covered once by the students with the teacher before the specific suggestopedic techniques are used.

Upon entering Lozanov's Suggestopedia program, students undergo a process referred to as "de-suggestion" before being introduced to the language learning techniques. The purpose of this process is to overcome the mental blocks to learning. According to Lozanov's theory, the three principal barriers to the reception of suggestions are emotional, logical and ethical. "The process of 'de-suggestion'...is largely one of overcoming the mental blocks to greater memorization." (Bancroft, 1976:35) The students are introduced to hypnotic suggestion that, according to Bancroft, liberates the mind and thereby activates the reserves of the mind, thus enhancing memorization.

Another part of the Suggestopedia method is termed "concert pseudo-passive learning". Lozanov stresses the importance of physical and mental relaxation in order to be open to suggestion. He claims that mental relaxation is of greater importance to teaching than muscle relaxation. "A state of mental relaxation in a pleasant and calm atmosphere is extremely important for

the diminution of fatigue, stress and strain and for the achievement of hypermnesia and speed and accuracy in work." (Bancroft, 1976:48) He advocates a pleasant stimulating environment with no negative suggestions to ensure positive emotions at the unconscious level. (Bancroft, 1976) The learning conducted under these ideal conditions of concert pseudo-passiveness means that a student is much more receptive to suggestion when deeply relaxed but not necessarily hypnotized. (Lindeman, 1979:28) It appears to be a trance-like state in which the entire group participates. One of the details worth mentioning is that in addition to providing pleasant surroundings, eighteenth century baroque music is played during the "concert pseudo-passive"learning sessions.

At its inception Lozanov's Institute of Suggestology in Bulgaria offered four-hour language classes comprised of three distinct parts:

"1. Previously learned material is reviewed, mainly through conversations between teacher and student, student and student. As in a seminar, the circular arrangement of the chairs provides for a free-and-easy exchange between members of the class. (From personal experience, I can report that these conversations are very animated. I conducted part of an English class in which the students reviewed the previous lesson by asking me questions about my profession, my hobbies, my country of origin and so on.)

"2. New material in the form of realistic dialogues and situations is presented in a somewhat traditional way, with the

necessary grammar and translation. Apart from the grammar and translation the lesson is conducted entirely in the foreign language.

"3. During a so-called seance, the new material is reinforced twice in a manner reminiscent of the television commercial on Sesame Street. The language dialogues are initially presented with varying intonations and rhythms and a coordination of sound and printed word or illustration. During the second presentation, the lesson dialogues are acted out by the instructor(s) over a background of calm, pleasant music. Throughout the entire seance, the students lean back in their chairs and breathe deeply. (The relaxation techniques are adapted from Savasana Yoga.)" (Bancroft, Reprinted from The Educational Courier, page 21)

A description of the learning environment which is, according to Lozanov, an important aspect of Suggestopedia is as follows: "Each language classroom contains twelve specially constructed chairs arranged in a semi-circle for the students. The instructor's chair stands at the head of the class. These fauteuils may be used as writing desks and also, in a reclining position, for relaxation. Two loudspeakers for music broadcasts are located on the wall in front of the room. A near-by television set is occasionally used for the presentation of language classes. Although the classrooms are small by our standards, a stage area is set aside for the performance of simple plays based on the lesson dialogues. Gymnastic

exercises take place in the courtyard outside the Institute." (Bancroft, Reprinted from The Educational Courier, page 2.)

In the intervening years since Suggestopedia was introduced by Ostrander and Schroeder, and reported on by Bancroft, an interest in the method has developed in the West. Suggestopedia appears to us to be a blending of Eastern disciplines such as Yoga and Transcendental Meditation with the West's concept of hypnotic techniques and Western pedagogical methodologies. "There is no clear-cut distinction between hypnosis, self-hypnosis and the use of waking suggestions. ...there appears to be a continuum with a deep hypnotic trance state falling at one end, a normal receptivity to suggestion at the other, and various degrees of relaxation, concentration and suggestibility in between. Although Lozanov insists that Suggestopedia is not hypnosis, his method does use suggestion and auto-suggestion to create a 'free state of consciousness' or meditative state which permits the brain to absorb knowledge more efficiently because it is freed from distractions. (Ostrander and Schroeder, 1970:288) He considers this to be a facet of parapsychology of which hypnosis is also a part. It is a question of semantics as to whether or not Suggestopedia can be labeled a hypnotic technique. Certainly, the name Suggestopedia is a propitious choice and does not conjure up the negative reactions and taboos that accompany the word hypnosis. Nevertheless, it remains that Lozanov, in earlier years, was a practitioner of hypnosis in his capacity as a medical doctor and Suggestology seems to be a hypnotic

technique that uses hypnosis of a light plane." (Hammerman, 1979:36-37)

In January 1979, two papers were presented on suggestion and education at a TESOL convention in Texas. Mary L. Lindeman discussed the historical precedent of Suggestopedia and Valdemar Phoenix investigated the technique. Both Lindeman and Phoenix are affiliated with the Language and Culture Center at the University of Houston. The following is a synopsis of the two presentations and their conclusions.

In her paper, "Suggestion in Education: The Historical Path of Suggestopedia", Mary L. Lindeman points out that it is safe to assume that historically methods of education have used some form of suggestion, be it good or bad. She chooses to explore those pedagogical methods and the research connected with them that specifically utilize the special techniques of suggestion.

One of the earliest forms of organized education were the yogic schools that date back 3,000 years and still are in existence today. They produced professional memorizers of sacred Indian literature by means of yoga which was developed as a method of mental enrichment for religious purposes. Western culture has had difficulty understanding Indian mysticism and has not been permitted familiarity with the yogic mental techniques due to their private religious nature. As a result, Western scientists have not been able to establish conclusive evidence for or against the notion that yoga improves intellectual faculties. Nevertheless, super-memory feats have been

observed by Westerners in India.

The course of history in Western education over the past two thousand years has been based on the faculties of logic and reason in which education was considered hard work and reason was the tool by which the mind became educated. Suggestion, although always implicitly present, was neglected in historical Western pedogogy. It was by accident that suggestion found its place in official Western history with the introduction of hypnotism to medicine in the eighteenth century by a Viennese doctor named Mesmer.

The medical history of hypnosis in the West is thoroughly outlined by Lindeman in her presentation. It traces a rocky road fraught with lack of understanding, wariness on the part of the public, and fear of the occult. But along the way there have been enlightened scholars who have recognized the value of hypnotic techniques in the educational setting.

The father of modern hypnotism, a French physician named Liebeault, who practiced in the last half of the nineteenth century, recognized hypnosis as a valuable educational tool to be used with delinquent children. In 1935, Clark L. Hull of Yale, extended the interest in hypnosis to the study of psychology in which he investigated susceptibility to hypnotism, the posthypnotic suggestion, learning in hypnotism, and hypnotic amnesia. It took Émile Coué, a Frenchman with a working knowledge of hypnotic technique to discover that light positive suggestion was more effective than a state of deep hypnotic trance. It wasn't until the twentieth century that his intuitive insights were verified by psychological and educational

research.

As early as 1890 articles on research relating to suggestibility in children may be found in books and professional journals. Since that time there have appeared numerous studies, scrupulously detailed by Lindeman, to attest to the positive contribution that light hypnotic technique has to offer to education. Most recently Martin Aster and Stanley Krippner have been strong advocates of educational hypnosis. Krippner, at the Kent State University Child Study Center, used hypnosis as an aid to better study habits, increase of concentration, reduction of test anxiety, increase of motivation, and help in special language skills. Ralph Alan Dale (1972) listed nine uses of hypnosis in education. Jampolsky (1970) reported the effective use of hypnosis in special education with learning disabled children. In the 1970's there has materialized in the West a growing acceptance of the principles of suggestion in the classroom and significant research is being conducted at a number of leading universities in the U.S.

In the 1970's, Dr. Georgi Lozanov, developed Suggestopedia, a new method of foreign language teaching based on suggestion and subliminal stimuli gleaned from his experience with hypnosis in the West and his observations of a yogi lawyer's ability to perform computer-like memorizations.

Valdemar Phoenix in his presentation, "Suggestion and Creative Potential", discusses the theory of suggestion as it is understood by contemporary philosophy and psychology and the application of suggestion as a teaching/learning tool -- both in relation to how Lozanov's method complies with what is known of suggestion.

According to Phoenix, there are two minds, the conscious mind that makes decisions, reasons, judges, and analyzes, and the subconscious mind that controls and creates -- the synthesizer of all the information fed into it through the conscious mind and through all sensory and non-sensory channels. An important concept to understanding Suggestopedia is the realization that it is not only the thought image that gets passed into the subconscious, but also the emotional state or feeling that the thought evokes, and both of these are stored together in the subconscious memory. Once a person consciously accepts an idea or belief as being logical or true (whether it is true or not) he passes it into the subconscious along with the emotional content that it evokes. All beliefs start out as direct or indirect suggestions that have been accepted by the individual and then become externalized as a reality in the person's life. There is more opposition to direct suggestion than to indirect suggestion. Indirect suggestion is directed towards the subconscious mind and therefore is less subject to conscious interference and resistance. Lozanov uses positive suggestion to overcome previous beliefs. He suggests a new positive idea to replace the old negative belief. He begins training with brief re-suggestion sessions that the teacher himself must experience in order to be able to conduct.

The authority of the teacher is very important to the practice of Suggestopedia. The students must have total respect for the teacher in order to accept the suggestions offered by the teacher at a deep level. This respect comes from the

teaching institution as a whole, to the methods employed, to the credentials of the teacher. Suggestology attempts to recapture the learning inquisitiveness and spontaneity of childhood via a process termed "Infantilization" by Lozanov. It is believed that a child-like attitude between teacher and student will foster creativeness thereby enhancing the ability to learn.

Suggestopedia contains a concept entitled double-planeness which refers to"...a form of communication which accesses both the left hemisphere of the brain, which is generally endowed with what we've been calling the conscious functions of the mind; and the right hemisphere, which generally houses the subconscious." (Phoenix, 1979:13)[1] Phoenix discusses this concept in relation to maintaining the on-going suggestion of a vast, and creative learning potential and presenting actual material in a 'suggestive' manner. He especially notes that all communication is not verbal and that a strong sense of legitimacy (decor of room, teacher's personality, etc.) is a form of non-verbal suggestion that is an important influence on the student's ability to learn. It is essential, according to this method, that the teacher present the material in a controlled, knowledgeable way so as not to inadvertently reinforce a student's learned limitations. Therefore, double-planeness also refers to how the teacher behaves in relation to the student when the student is learning. The teacher must be able to reach both hemispheres of the brain (the conscious and the subconscious) as well as all of the students in the class.

According to Phoenix, students have their own preferred input channel or combination of channels and also a preferred representational system (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic) for learning, as do teachers. It is essential for anyone who uses suggestion as a teaching method to know the specific techniques for determining a person's preferred input channel and representational system (Bandler & Grinder, 1978) and to be able to present material in a manner that is agreeable to the student. In other words, the teacher must train himself to be fluent in communication in all channels (not only in his own preferred channels) in a congruent fashion thereby expanding his own potential as well as that of the student. Phoenix and Lindeman are at present working on the development of specific techniques for congruent teaching.

Two examples from the techniques of Suggestopedia; intonational-rhythmic readings of materials and concert listening are good ways of directly communicating with the subconscious part of the brain. These techniques, when used correctly, place the student in a super-suggestive, relaxed state and allow him to subconsciously absorb what is being taught while the logical portion of the brain is being distracted by auditory input (music).

Phoenix concludes by saying that specific methodologies are not as crucial to the learning situation as the rapport established between the teacher and students. It is in the total behavior of the teacher, on a personality level, and on conscious and subconscious planes, that lies the value of the

suggestive approach.

Both Lindeman and Phoenix point out that the success of the conscious and effective use of suggestion in education depends on the creativity and sensitivity of the individual teacher. Lindeman delineates some of the benefits derived from this method as relaxation for learning purposes, creating a good mind set for being a student, developing the use of the subconscious to enhance learning, change of student attitude from negative to positive, increased motivation, and overcoming emotional blocks. In conclusion she says that "In education suggestion is a force so powerful, but so basic, that it goes unnoticed. Those educators who are aware of its potential and sensitive to its use will be in a position to enhance every teaching activity, directly and indirectly."

"Suggestopedic language programs have been started in Canada, Austria, and most Eastern European countries. The Moscow Olympic Committee is considering using the method to train workers to speak French or English during the 1980 Olympics. In the U.S. Suggestopedic courses are offered by Mankind Research Unlimited (MRU) in Silver Spring, Maryland, and by Language in New Dimensions (LIND) in San Francisco." (Lindeman, 1979:28-29)

Suggestology, or SALT (suggestive-accelerative learning and teaching) is now being experimented with in a few school systems in the U.S. It is an adaptation of the Lozanov method and employs the power of suggestion in the classroom. Suggestion is systematically used in a carefully contrived academic setting using a broad spectrum of such supportive techniques as physical

and mental exercise, music and fantasy. Teachers volunteer for the program and once selected receive up to 120 hours of specialized training. To date, a few schools in Texas, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, California, and Iowa have been trying out the method. Iowa has done a two-year study of the effects of "suggestological" teaching on several hundred school children, the results of which are soon to be published in the Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching. (Fincher, 1978:64)

The study entitled "A Two Year Evaluation of the Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (SALT) Method in Central Iowa Public Schools" by D.H. Schuster, Iowa State University, and R.A. Prichard, Iowa AEA-11, is dated August, 1978. It investigated the effectiveness of a suggestopedic method developed by the researchers (SALT) for the purpose of improving classroom attitudes and achievements when it was tried out in various selected classes in the Iowa school system. It was a two-year experimental field study in which the SALT method was applied to varying socioeconomic levels, grade levels and subject matter by sixteen public school teachers during the first year and ten during the second. Teachers were specifically trained in the method with particular emphasis on principles in the background of Suggestology/Suggestopedia; openness in a greater communication by the teacher; creative dramatics; testing development; and some research design. The subject matter covered in the experiment included elementary school spelling, reading and health, junior high earth science, life

science, art and agribusiness, plus German I and a pilot project in German II. There was a grade level range from one through ten. The most meaningful forms of testing criteria used were achievement tests prepared by each of the individual teachers involved in the experiment and the Brooks Student Questionnaire which measured student attitudes of student-teacher affective relationships, perceived school stress, and school-learning orientation. "In terms of raw data for all teachers, there was much support after the second year for the SALT method in terms of accelerating achievement and essentially no support in terms of student attitudes. The SALT method appeared to be equally appropriate for elementary as well as junior high school students. There were no great differences between results with low socioeconomic status students vs. those at the middle socioeconomic status stratum." (Schuster and Prichard, 1978)

Schuster and Prichard point out in their report that the purpose of their field experiment was to find out if SALT can provide an effective and appropriate alternative to present educational methods which do not seem to be doing a satisfactory job upon observation of the declining achievement test score pattern in U.S. schools in the last decade. They used Lozanov's work as a model for their program because, according to reports from Bulgaria, his work has demonstrated that learners are capable of learning material at accelerated rates and his method has been shown to be successful when used in teaching a number of different subjects in Europe. A few minor attempts in Iowa, Georgia, and Texas have been made to adapt Lozanov's

methodology to U.S. schools, all of which tend to support the approach. (Schuster and Prichard, 1978:3)

The following paragraph is descriptive of the method adapted to the Iowa field experiment:

"The version of the Lozanov method practiced in this project has three primary phases. Phase one is a preparation phase in which learners are required to perform simple physical exercises, undergo mind-calming exercises, and use imagery to recall early pleasant learning experiences. Phase two is the presentation phase where a positive suggestive atmosphere is created by the instructor. This involves a process in which desuggestion is used to remove barriers that learners have set on their learning skills. The first presentation of curriculum material is made in a fascinating and artistic fashion with dynamic, dramatic swings of intonation on emphasis from shouts to whispers while learners try to project themselves into the material and experience it. The second step in the presentation phase is passive in nature and the instructor requests that learners relax and listen to material presented while listening to background music. During the third phase, practice, learners converse and use the material presented before. Role playing is encouraged and tests are given. Tests are corrected but left ungraded. Grading is done primarily on the basis of an announced final exam." (Schuster and Prichard, 1978:4)

The first year of the Iowa study was not conclusive because of problems with individual teachers and administrative and testing problems. However, the results of the second year

were considered to be positive and the researchers continue to be enthusiastic about the method. (Schuster and Prichard, 1978:5)

Schuster and Prichard are concerned that; "SALT may be classified as just another good idea that serves better than most when one works hard at it..." They question the future of the method. "Given recognition of the hard work expended in advancing this far, the obvious question is, what next? Even though the advantages of SALT over conventional instruction have been demonstrated, what does it take to do more than that? Statistically significant results are fine, but what about tapping the mind's reserves...what would it take to make SALT classes really take off and fulfill their potential in terms of leaving the rest of educational technology far behind?" (Schuster and Prichard, 1978:19)

Tapping the mind's reserves is what this method is all about. Earl Stevick in Memory Meaning and Method: Some Psychological Perspectives on Language Learning outlines the principles of Lozanov's work and concludes by saying: "This brings us to Principles...which have to do with the psychic state of the learner. Here is where the theoretical and experimental basis of Suggestopedia is much more fully elaborated than we find with any other system of language teaching, and here lies, in my opinion, its most distinctive and its most interesting contribution. Suggestopedia...tells us that once doubts and defenses have been removed, nothing can stop a learner who has the usual extrinsic motivations." (Stevick, 1976:158)

The "tapping the mind's reserves" aspect of Suggestology is that part that cannot be proven without almost blind trust on the part of educators willing to try the method to find out if the results are truly as amazing as they are purported to be. To a great extent we have had to learn through trial and error because although from outward appearances the Bulgarians are willing to share their expertise with us, the Institute is under government control, and we are not shown exactly the same classrooms nor given the same pertinent information as is given to the countries behind the Iron Curtain. (Ostrander, Schroeder and Ostrander, 1979:45-50) We have had to, and will continue to have to, use our own imagination and do our own experiments with rhythm and breathing etc. to determine what is effective teaching via suggestion in the West. This takes belief in the value of the method and dedication on the part of those involved in order to give the method enough credibility to be used on a large scale.

Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder with Nancy Ostrander have written a new book entitled Super-Learning that describes their updated interpretation of the method and delineates specific exercises that are supposed to enable us to develop the ability to use our minds to their fullest capacity. According to their theory the two basic secrets are the relaxed state and synchronized rhythm.

They write: "Superlearning is a form of holistic education; it involves both body and mind working in harmony. It's based on the idea that the mind is able to learn faster and more easily

when the body is running at a more efficient level." (Ostrander, Schroeder, and Ostrander, 1979:63) They claim that along with the increased ability to learn also comes other benefits that affect the entire well-being of the person dedicated to this type of program. It is not achieved without effort and self-discipline. One must follow a specific program, much like an exercise program to keep physically in shape, in order to get in good mental condition, and one must make these mental exercises a way of life in order to take advantage of the learning dividends.

The preliminary exercises to practice consist of relaxation, mind calming, joy of learning recall, and breathing to a beat exercises. The designated purpose of these exercises is to learn how to bring yourself into the harmonized state of body and mind conducive to learning. The most significant aspect of developing memory control, according to Ostrander, Schroeder, and Ostrander, is being able to synchronize breathing to the material being spoken. Once the preliminary exercises are mastered, the student is ready for the memory session. The material to be learned should be reviewed as vividly as possible before beginning the session.

The supermemory session consists of two parts; first, silently reading along with the material being rhythmically recited by a teacher or a tape-recorder, and simultaneously practicing breathing according to directions synchronized with the recitation, and second, closing the eyes and listening again to the same material with specific recommended music in the background.

An example of how the second part is done with music is: "Immediately after running through the material once, put down your paper, dim the lights, lean back, and close your eyes. Listen to the same material recited again, but this time with music. Pay attention to what is being said. Breathe along with the recitation--breathing out and in during the silences, easily holding your breath as the information is delivered. As you begin to feel comfortable with the technique, try visualizing the material to further hook your memory. But don't strain and don't try too hard. Just listen to the words and breathe, and review images of the material." (Ostrander, Schroeder, and Ostrander, 1979:109)

Ostrander, Schroeder, and Ostrander offer many different types of exercises to practice for adults and children. They give lists of music that are conducive to superlearning and give all kinds of tips that can be incorporated into children or adult oriented programs. A large part of the book is devoted to ideas that can be used in implementing a superlearning program. It remains to be seen if the public will work with the material offered to see if superlearning really works.

Conclusions and Implications

Suggestopedia is an innovative and exciting approach to teaching but it is not without its problems. An attempt to initiate a Suggestopedic program into the public school system is an enormous undertaking to which Schuster and Prichard can attest. The method places heavy demands upon the teachers who must receive special training in order to be able to use its

techniques. "After a 120-hour (only 40 hours for some) training period covering a wide variety of topics, many of which deserved at least one full college course, the teachers were expected to:

1. Accept the proposition that suggestion is a powerful, but usually only inadvertently-used tool which is capable of freeing students' minds for higher levels of achievement.

2. Install and regularly carry out an instructional cycle which contained unfamiliar activities (e.g., the relaxation/visualization/music review) together with other activities with which they were somewhat familiar, but had little real facility (most people would agree that a good teacher should conduct interesting lessons which motivate students through the use of the fine arts...but how many teachers actually do that?).

3. Accomplish this without appropriate materials, with a relatively small amount of training, and during the first project year, with little administrative support.

4. Be judged on a student output (measured achievement) basis, rather than by the evasive mutterings characteristic of most educational evaluations." (Schuster and Prichard, 1979:18-19) Even after all the work, effort and time, put forth on the Iowa study, the results, although promising are not conclusive. That is because when dealing with an affective subject such as Suggestology, the only true test is research over an extended period of time with lots of room for trial and error. The real difficulty is in getting the public sup-

port to continue to research the method. There are people who will consider it to be a pipe dream and of course, they may be right.

Thomas Scovel gave a scathing criticism of Suggestopedia at the TESOL convention in Boston, February-March 1979 of which a detailed review will appear in the TESOL Quarterly this summer (1979). His criticism can be summarized by three points.

"1. Lozanov does not adequately document his incredible claims with emperical evidence,

2. Suggestopedia relies on facilities which a lot of EFL programs can't afford, and

3. Most important of all, most psycholinguistic evidence shows that 'memory' is quite irrelevant to the global tasks of picking up the four skills of a second language,"

In conclusion, "...considering the strong claims made by Lozanov and his disciples, I find Suggestopedia disappointing," (Scovel, Correspondence, June 5, 1979)

Education in the United States is highly competitive. Our whole way of life is fraught with tension-producing pressures. The ability to relax and concentrate is elusive to many Americans. There are students who thrive on competition but many cannot keep up the pace. They become so distracted and anxiety ridden that they are unable to compete to the best of their natural ability. Suggestopedia offers a means of learning how to put oneself in a state most conducive to learning. It is a teaching strategy that can be transferred to a learning strategy.

Upon introduction to the method, the role of the teacher

as the authority is the most important part. The rapport established between teacher and student is an essential part of the learning process. Teachers trained in Suggestopedia have to believe in the method and be particularly in tune to their students' responses, as ideally all teachers should be. But it appears that in order to successfully carry out a Suggestopedic program, one would need some very special teachers. Students also have to become committed to the program. Nothing is without effort, and learning by means of Suggestopedia takes a certain amount of self-discipline as does all learning. Certainly, if a whole Suggestopedia program is not in order, suggestopedic techniques have a place in the classroom potpourri along with other pedogogical techniques.

Although the material presentation is not all that different from other teaching methods, the unique aspect of Suggestology is in its parapsychological realm. It is because of this mysterious side of the learning process that is difficult to prove scientifically, that it suffers in credibility and educators are hesitant to try it out. We have been slow in this country to deal with parapsychological research. There are many things that we don't understand and so we dismiss them as ridiculous.

There is research being done in the West now that lends credence, if not proof, to the idea that there is an energy exchange going on inside us and between us and the environment. (Ostrander, Schroeder and Ostrander, 1979:81) Eastern philosophers believe this energy to be the basis of life and the

energy of genius. Breathing, rhythm and sound are thought to be the necessary ingredients to heightened energy. Therefore, it is possible that we are subconsciously affected by the sounds around us (we can become unreasonably irritated by unpleasant sounds and tranquilized by harmonious ones) and it is not so difficult to believe that music with a specific beat that is in harmony with our body rhythms can be conducive to learning. We certainly are affected by nature's rhythms. The sound of the waves, the beat of the rain, the ebb and the flow of the tides, the changing of the seasons, the migration of the birds--we can't exactly explain these things, but we accept them. And so it should be with learning.

In the opinion of this writer, we all walk around in our own individual magnetic field. When we feel good about ourselves - we attract others; when we feel dissatisfied with ourselves - we repel them. Our ability to succeed affects how we feel about ourselves. An educational method that teaches us how to coordinate our subconscious and conscious abilities in order to process information and make it more readily available, is worth the effort necessary to implement it. If we can learn to relax and concentrate and absorb information in an efficient manner, we can get positive results and this in turn has a positive affect on our self-esteem and total personality.

Suggestopedia has some unique and promising aspects. But it is complicated, contrived and hard to implement. It would take extensive teacher training programs, good facilities, and

the right attitude on the part of the community, school administration, parents, teachers and students. It would need complete community support over an extended period of time to find out whether the benefits were worth the effort. Nevertheless, the possibility that superlearning is achievable is very enticing.

Footnotes

[1]Experts in the West are not able to identify, at this time, where the subconscious is located in the brain. It is thought that the left hemisphere controls abilities such as reason and logic and that the right hemisphere controls creative, artistic, non-verbal and affective-type behaviors. (Marlene Andalman, Ph.D. psychology, private interview, June, 1979)

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